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Message Text

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ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 H-02 AID-05 SR-02 ORM-01

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P R 120738Z MAY 75 ZDK
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4945
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 5221

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF VN HK
SUBJ: STAFFDEL PARKER AND HONG KONG VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

1. SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SFAFFDEL PARKER, HKG AUTHORITIES DESCRIBED EFFORTS TO INTENATIONALIZE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE SITUATION IN HONG KONG. REFUGEES ARE BEING INTITIALLY PROCESSED BY HKG THEMSELVES WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. HKG WILL THEN PRESS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING US, TO ACCEPT THOSE WITH WHOM THEY HAVE TIES. IN DISUCCCSION OF HKG NEED FOR US ASSISTANCE , MS. PARKER INTRODUCED POSSIBILITY OF US FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF REFUGEES IN HK RATHER THAN MOVING SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER WITH US TIES ON TO THE US. MS. PARKER WILL REPORT TO HER COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON HER FINDINGS IN TOUR OF EAST ASIAN REFUGEE CENTERS.
END SUMMARY

2. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE (REFUGEE AND ESCAPEES) MINORITY COUNSEL DOROTHY PARKER
WAS IN HONG KONG MAY 8-11 ON REFUGEE FACT-FINDING VISIT WHICH INCLUDED TOUR OF REFUGEES CAMPS, CONTACT WITH VOLAGS,
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AND CALL ON MAY HKG POLAD ALAN DONALD AND IMMIGRATION

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DIRECTOR MARTIN ROWLANDS. HKG OFFICIALS OPENED BY
CITING HK'S TRADITIONAL ROLE AS REFUGEE CENTER WITH TWO
THIRDS OF POPULATION OF REFUGEE ORIGIN. FROM TIME TO TIME
OPEN ARMS POLICY HAD TO BE MODIFIED TO AVOID OVERLOAD
AND DETERIORATION OF LIVING STANDARDS FOR THOSE ALREADY
ACCEPTED. NEVERTHELESS, HK DESIRES TO DO ITS PART IN THE
WORLD HUMANITARIAN EFFORT TO ASSIST VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES. HKG HAS BEEN USING 45 IMMIGRATION OFFICERS TO
CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH DETAINED VIETNAMESE. BY MAY 12,
THERE WILL BE A COMPLETE LIST WITH REFUGEE QUALIFICATIONS,
FAMILY, SKILLS, AND CULTURAL (INCLUDING LINGUISTIC)
QUALIFICATIONS AND AREA OF RESETTLEMENT INTEREST. IN THIS
INTIIAL EFFORT, HKG DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE THE ASSISTANCE OF
ICEM OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SINCE HKG BELIEVES INTERNATION-
ALIZATION OF EFFORT CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MAINTAINING
COMPLETE CONTROL OVER REFUGEES AND MAKING DIRECT APPEALS
TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS AS APPROPRIATE.

3. CONTINUING, THE OFFICIALS EXPLAINED TO MS. PARKER THAT
ONCE THE LIST IS PREPARED, IT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE
AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL , AS WELL OTHER CONSULATES IN
HONG KONG, TOGETHER WITH AN INDICATION OF THOSE WHO WISH TO
APPLY FOR AN ENTRY TO THE PARTICULAR COUNTRY. OFFICIALS OF
THAT COUNTRY WILL THEN BE INVITED TO THE CAMPS TO SCREEN
THOSE GROUPS. SO FAR, CANADA HAS BEEN MOST FORTHCOMING
WITH ITS IMMIGRATION OFFICIERS ALREADY SCREENING REFUGEES
AND PREPARATIONS BEING MADE FOR MOVEMENT OF GROUPS TO
CANADA. FRANCE WILL ACCEPT A "FAIR NUMBER" AND EVEN
PANAMA IS WILLING TO ACCEPT 12. HKG BELIEF IS THAT EACH
COUNTRY SHOULD ACCEPT THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY RELATIVES
LIVING IN THAT COUNTRY, WHO WORKED FOR THE COUNTRY OR A COMPANY FROM
THAT COUNTRY, OR HAVE SOME SPECIAL TIES. THE LEFTOVERS OR
"DREGS", THE MILITARY TYPES, AND "BULLY BOYS" WILL THEN BE
APPORTIONED OUT TO THE SAME COUNTRIES WITH A REQUEST
THAT THEY ALSO BE ABSORBED.

4. FOR ITS OWN PART, OFFICIALS MADE CLEAR THAT HKG WILL
ACCEPT THOSE REFUGEES WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN HONG KONG AND IS WILLING
TO BEND ITS RULES TO INCLUDE EXAPANDED FAMILY MEMBERS AS WELL
AS IMMEDIATE RELATIVES. ADDITIONALLY, HKG WILL TAKE WHATEVER
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ORPHANS ARE INCLUDED IN THE GROUP SINCE "OUTSIDE OF VIETNAM, THERE
IS NO BETTER PLACE THAN HK TO RAISE A VIETNAMESE ORPHAN".
THUS, HKG BELIEVES IT WILL END UP WITH "MANY HUNDREDS" OF
THE CURRENT REFUGEES.

5. HKG AUTHORITIES EXPRESSED HOPE THAT USG WOULD PROVIDE
"MAJOR ASSISTANCE" IN THIS EFFORT. WHEN QUERIED BY MS. PARKER
ON THIS, ROWLAND INDICATED THAT ONE THING THE US COULD DO WOULD

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BE TO ISSUE A STATEMENT INDICATING THAT HKG HAS
A TREMENDOUS PROBLEM, BUT HONG KONG IS DOING ITS SHARE
BY TAKING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN AND
CARING FOR THEM WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT
FOR THEIR RESETTLEMENT AND THAT THE USG APPRECIATES THIS
EFFORT ON HONG KONG'S PART AND WILL ASSIST WHERE IT CAN.
WHEN ASKED IF HKG WAS SEEKING FINCANCIAL HELP FOR ITS HELP
OF THE RESETTLEMENT EFFORT, ROWLANDS REPLIED (CAREFULLY
STATING THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING OFFICIALLY) THAT HKG
COULD HANDLE PROBLEM BETTER IF ADDITONAL FUNDING WERE
AVAILABLE. MS. PARKER ASKED IF HONG KONG COULD USE FUNDS
TO ABSORBE REFUGEES WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE EXPECT TO GO TO THE
UNITED STATES. ROWLANDS THOUGHT SO.

6. SUBSEQUENT TO THE INTERVIEW, MS. ROWLAND VISITED ALL
THREE REFUGEES CAMPS AND, BASED ON HER LONG EXPERIECNCE IN
REFUGEE MATTERS, CONCLUDED THAT HONGKONG WAS DOING A
MAGNIFICENT JOB IN CARING FOR THE REFUGEES. HER STATEMENT
TO THIS EFFECT APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE COLONY'S
LEADING MORNING NEWSPAPER THE DAY AFTER HER DEPARTURE.
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